

Audley Primary School

Audley Road, Stechford, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 9HY

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have been weak in recent years. Pupils have not made enough progress in English or mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. Some teachers do not expect enough of pupils. They do not check pupils' understanding in lessons and their questioning does not help to deepen pupils' learning as well as it should. However, there is also much teaching that is effective and some that is strong.
- Pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is not as well planned as it should be. The leadership of these subjects has not proved effective over recent years.
- The school's assessment procedures are not fit for purpose. Consequently, until very recently, assessment information has been inaccurate and of little use to leaders.
- Leaders do not always evaluate the impact that their actions are having. Planning for the use of funds to support disadvantaged pupils have weaknesses.
- The drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust (MAT) has made several changes to its governance structures this year. This has led to confusion about which body is holding leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Attendance remains below the average for schools in similar contexts.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has improved greatly this year because of effective leadership and strong support and challenge from the drb Ignite MAT. Teaching has improved, and pupils are making much better progress as a result.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They are articulate, enthusiastic learners. They are respectful, courteous and well mannered.
- The early years provides children with a good start to school. Effective teaching means that children make good progress in all areas of learning. They are well prepared to move to Year 1.
- Relationships are strong throughout the school. Staff know and care for pupils. Pupils are safe and happy in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils in all years make good progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of the amount and quality of work that pupils produce in lessons
 - check pupils’ understanding of their work in lessons
 - provide tasks that challenge all pupils, especially the most able
 - use questioning to deepen pupils’ understanding of their work.
- Improve attendance to the national average by seeking out and using good practice from other schools.
- Improve the impact of leadership by ensuring that:
 - teachers’ assessments of pupils’ attainment are reliable
 - leaders carefully evaluate the impact that improvement strategies, including those funded by the pupil premium, are having
 - all improvement plans contain specific actions and clear success criteria so that leaders and trustees can measure their success and act on their findings
 - the curriculum is well planned and sequenced so that pupils’ learning, in all subjects, builds from year to year in the same way as it does in English and mathematics
 - there is effective leadership of those subjects that are in addition to English and mathematics.
- The trust should ensure that their governance structure for the school is clear, unambiguous and understood by all.

Inspectors recommend that an external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be carried out to determine how this aspect of leadership might be strengthened.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- This is a school that is improving rapidly. Decisive action this year, from leaders and the trust, has seen teaching improve considerably. Pupils' progress is now improving strongly in almost all years as a result. However, these actions could and should have taken place sooner. Consequently, there remains much to be done before the school provides a good standard of education for its pupils.
- The executive headteacher, who joined the school at the start of June this year, has a clear and persuasive vision for the school. She has already formed an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has begun to get to grips with the failings in its assessment procedures. She is well supported by effective senior and middle leaders. Together they provide good capacity to see the school continue to improve.
- Leaders' plans to address weaknesses vary in quality and usefulness. For example, the school improvement plan is sufficiently detailed and focuses well on the key areas that need to improve, including outcomes, teaching and attendance. Some other improvement plans, however, lack detail about the specific actions to be undertaken and how success will be measured. These do not help to focus improvement activities well. Additionally, leaders do not always evaluate the impact that improvement strategies are having. So, they are not clear about what is working and what needs to be changed or discarded. This is the case to some degree for middle leaders' improvement plans, the pupil premium strategy and plans to improve attendance.
- The assessment system used by the school in recent years has been cumbersome, complicated and not understood well by leaders or staff. The information that it has generated about pupils' attainment has been inaccurate and unreliable. Consequently, leaders have not been able to analyse patterns and trends accurately. Neither have they been able to use assessment information to target extra support. Despite this, teachers and leaders have used their professional judgement to make decisions about pupils who need extra help. In many instances, they have done this appropriately. Pupils have therefore not been significantly disadvantaged by the failings in assessment procedures.
- Leaders have an accurate view about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. They take appropriate action to address weaknesses, by providing well-targeted support and training. For example, having identified some weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics, leaders sourced training and resources that have seen the teaching of this subject improve considerably. Most staff who completed Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire agreed that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement. Teachers new to the profession are very well supported in the school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with an appropriate range of subjects, as defined by the National Curriculum. The English and mathematics curricula are well planned and better teaching is now seeing pupils make good progress in most years. Other subjects are taught through 'topic' lessons. Topics have been carefully selected and pupils find them interesting. Topics support pupils' reading and writing well because they are based around books that classes are reading together. However, learning in subjects

other than English and mathematics is not as well planned or sequenced as it could be. For example, what pupils learn in history in one year does not necessarily build well on what they learned in history in the previous year. This is because the curriculum is organised largely within year groups and there is insufficient leadership of individual subjects in the school.

- The formal, taught curriculum is supported well by a broad range of extra-curricular activities, off-site trips and residential visits. Sport is a particular strength of the school and many pupils take part in sporting activities. Leaders make effective use of primary physical education and sport funding to encourage participation in sport and to train staff. The curriculum as a whole makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. This area is well led. Leaders understand pupils' needs and ensure that teachers are aware of these and how they might need to adapt their teaching in response. Leaders provide teachers with helpful advice and guidance. Consequently, most pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points, although less so in classes where teaching is weaker.
- Leaders know the pupils well, including any factors that might form a barrier to learning. For example, leaders have accurately identified issues that need to be overcome in order for disadvantaged pupils to be successful in school. They have put in place a range of strategies to address these issues. However, they have not evaluated the impact these strategies are having as well as they ought. Consequently, they are not clear about what is working and what is not, and they are not refining and improving their strategies.

Governance of the school

- Prior to this year, in common with all schools in the MAT, Audley had a local governing body. In August 2018, trustees dissolved the local governing body, with the intention that its functions would be taken over by an executive governance group (EGG) overseeing two schools. The EGG was to be supported and advised by the trust improvement board (TIB). Trustees have since decided that this arrangement is proving ineffective and are in process of revising the governance structure across the MAT. Consequently, the governance of the school has been provided by the TIB this year. Because of these changes, there has, at times, been some confusion among school staff and those commissioned by the MAT to support the school as to who is holding leaders to account. However, despite this, members of the TIB have helped the school move forward in several key areas.
- The TIB has provided effective support and strong challenge to the school's leaders this year, largely through the trust's chief executive officer (CEO), director of school improvement and challenge advisor. In several areas, intervention and support from drb Ignite has seen considerable impact, for example, in the early years, in English, in mathematics and in senior leadership.
- Trustees have ensured that statutory duties have been carried out diligently. Money has been spent to good effect in improving the school's security and providing pupils with attractive classrooms and outdoor play areas. They have ensured that

safeguarding arrangements are effective. However, they have not checked on the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils with enough diligence.

- Trustees recognise that actions to address weak outcomes at the end of key stage 2 could and should have taken place 12 months sooner than they did.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and led well.
- All policies and procedures are clear, well understood and fit for purpose. Leaders have trained staff well to spot the signs that pupils might need extra help. Training is tailored well to the school's context. For example, recent training has included issues such as extremism in Birmingham. Staff pass on to leaders any concerns that they have and leaders deal with these speedily, involving outside agencies when appropriate. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils get the support they need, challenging outside agencies when they are unhappy with their response.
- Child-protection records are detailed, well organised and stored securely. Procedures to recruit staff safely are well understood and used appropriately.
- All parents who spoke with inspectors at the start of the inspection said that their children are safe in school, as did almost all who responded to Parent View.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although teaching still needs to improve, there is some strong practice within the school. This is providing good-quality learning where it is evident. However, leaders have not yet ensured that all groups of pupils are taught well enough to make good progress.
- Where teaching is weak, teachers do not have high enough expectations of the amount and quality of work that pupils produce in lessons. Tasks are not matched well to pupils' abilities, especially for the most able. Consequently, pupils are not challenged sufficiently and make less progress than they should.
- Teachers do not consistently check on pupils' understanding in lessons. At times, teachers are not aware that pupils are either struggling or finding the work too easy. Some teachers do not use questioning well to deepen pupils' understanding of the concepts being studied. They are too accepting of brief responses to questions instead of expecting pupils to provide full and detailed answers.
- Much effective and some strong practice is evident across the school. Here, expectations are high and work is well planned to challenge pupils. Questions are used well to develop pupils' understanding and teachers know exactly how pupils are getting on with their work.
- Throughout the school, strong and respectful relationships are evident. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and care for them. Pupils like and trust staff. They value the care and support they receive from the school's adults.
- Pupils with SEND are, for the most part, taught well throughout the school. Most teachers use detailed information about these pupils' needs when planning lessons.

Consequently, teaching generally meets their needs well. Teaching assistants provide effective support in class. This is particularly valuable when teaching is less strong and ensures that pupils with SEND continue to make progress even when this is the case.

- The teaching of reading and writing is now effective. Phonics are taught well, especially in the early years. Throughout the school, work in all subjects supports pupils' reading and the development of their writing well.
- Following considerable training, mathematics is taught well in all years. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in arithmetic and this is successful. Pupils are routinely expected to solve problems and explain their reasoning. This helps to develop a sound understanding of the concepts they are studying. However, at times pupils do not spend enough time practising and consolidating new ideas, before moving on to new work. This is particularly the case in areas of mathematics other than arithmetic, such as shape.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's long-standing focus on the importance of values contributes very well to pupils' personal development. For example, one key value is 'respect' and pupils of all ages understand its importance. They are kind and respectful to each other and to adults. They are polite and well mannered. They value the differences between themselves and their friends.
- The curriculum and extra-curricular programme contribute well to pupils' personal development. For example, many pupils take part in well-organised sporting activities at breaktime, lunchtime and after school. Residential visits for pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 help to foster pupils' independence and self-confidence.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. All pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed this to be the case. They have been taught how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils explained to inspectors how you must not become 'friends' with anyone online unless you know who they are.
- Bullying is rare in the school. Discussions with pupils and school records confirm this to be the case. Pupils told inspectors that they know who to talk to in school if they, or a friend, are bullied. They trust the school's staff to deal with any problems they might face.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best. They listen attentively to teachers and each other. They work hard alone and they cooperate well when working in groups. They contribute readily and maturely to whole-class discussions. Disruption of lessons is rare.

- The school is calm and orderly at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils line up maturely to eat. They play sensibly with their friends, making good use of the school's excellent outdoor facilities.
- Because pupils behave well, serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour are uncommon. Consequently, leaders rarely exclude pupils. They use exclusion appropriately, as a sanction of last resort and one that is very rarely repeated.
- Attendance is below the national average for primary schools and below the average for schools in similar contexts. The high number of pupils who join and leave the school during the year presents a particular challenge. Leaders employ a range of strategies to encourage regular attendance and some modest improvement is evident this year. However, leaders do not evaluate the success of individual strategies as well as they might and they have not sought alternative strategies that have proved effective in similar schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of Year 6 have been weak in recent years. This has been the case in reading, writing and, to a slightly lesser extent, mathematics. Pupils have made poor progress from their starting points during their time in key stage 2 and attainment has been well below average as a consequence. This has been the case for most groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Much improved teaching is now seeing pupils' progress improve considerably in key stage 2. Older pupils still have gaps in their knowledge, but these are being addressed. Progress is now strong in Years 4 and 6. It is good in Year 5 but remains weaker in Year 3. Overall pupils' progress through the school, although improving, is not yet good.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making similar progress to others in school in all years. Consequently, their attainment remains lower than other pupils nationally, but the gaps are closing.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average in 2018. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved this year because of strong teaching in Year 2. The proportion of pupils achieving at a greater depth has improved markedly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress remains a little weaker in Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was broadly average in 2018. It has fallen a little this year but is likely to be just a little below the national average.
- Pupils with SEND now make good progress in most years. Teachers and leaders carefully check their progress against precise learning targets, not relying on the school's weak assessment systems. They use this information to provide extra support when needed.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in the early years because of effective teaching. Many children join the early years with starting points well below those typical for their age.

The proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception, although below the national average, is increasing and represents good progress from their starting points. These children are well prepared to start Year 1. Those who do not reach a good level of development are supported well in Year 1 to catch up with their peers.

- Teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge that they use well to provide interesting and engaging activities in all areas of learning. They ensure that there is an appropriate balance of child- and adult-initiated activities. The learning environment is attractive and stimulating. Occasionally activities could be more challenging for the most able children.
- Basic skills, including early phonics, counting and pencil grip, are developed well through work in small groups with adult supervision. Children's physical development is promoted well through a range of experiences available both inside and outside.
- Adults accurately assess what children can do. They use this information well to plan each child's next steps in learning. Appropriate support is provided for any children who need it. For example, children with SEND are identified quickly and supported well. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported appropriately according to their stage of English acquisition.
- Children behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They play together sensibly, taking turns and listening to their friends. Safeguarding is effective and all staff understand that keeping children safe is their top priority.
- Parents are welcomed into Nursey and Reception. Those who spoke with inspectors said that their children are happy. They said that staff are friendly and approachable, and that they value the advice and support that staff provide.
- At the time of inspection, new leadership of the early years had been in place for a very short period of time. It is too early to judge its effectiveness.

School details

Unique reference number	143437
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10099803

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	895
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Sheldon
Executive headteacher	Hilary Wheeldon
Telephone number	0121 464 3139
Website	www.audley.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@audley.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average primary school.
- Audley Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2016. When its predecessor school, Audley Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the drb Multi Academy Trust. According to its scheme of delegation, responsibility for carrying out statutory duties and providing leaders with challenge and support sits with the EGG, supported by the TIB. However, in practice this is not the case and governance functions are carried out by the TIB.
- The executive headteacher joined the school at the start of June 2019, two weeks before the inspection.
- The school's pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Approximately one third of pupils speak English as an additional language.

- Almost one half of pupils are disadvantaged. This is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- A higher than average number of pupils leave and join the school during the academic year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons; most of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to many pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktimes, lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors visited several class assemblies.
- Inspectors looked in detail at pupils' work in Years 1, 3, 5 and 6. They did this alongside school leaders.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including information relating to governance, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' progress and the checks made on the quality of teaching.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with the trust's chief education officer and director of school improvement. He also met with the school's challenge adviser.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of parents' views by considering the 133 responses to Parent View, including the 19 'free-text' comments.
- Inspectors considered the 50 responses from staff to Ofsted's survey.

Inspection team

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Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Collette Higgins	Ofsted Inspector

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